What Do Donors Want?
Heterogeneity by Party and Policy Domain
(Research Note)[*]

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Abstract

Influential theories indicate concern that campaign donors exert outsized political influence. However, little data documents what donors actually want from government; and existing research largely neglects donors' views on individual issues. We argue there should be significant heterogeneity by party and policy domain in how donors' views diverge from citizens. We support this argument with the largest survey of U.S. partisan donors to date, including an oversample of the largest donors. We find that Republican donors are much more conservative than Republican citizens on economic issues, whereas their views are similar on social issues. By contrast, Democratic donors are much more liberal than Democratic citizens on social issues, whereas their views are more similar on economic issues. Both parties' donors are more pro-globalism than their citizen counterparts. We replicate these patterns in an independent dataset. These patterns can help inform significant debates about representation, inequality, and populism in American politics.

Members of Congress are advised to spend nearly half their working hours raising money from large-dollar partisan donors,[1] putting them in constant touch with a narrow slice of the U.S. population: under 1% of Americans donate over \$200 in any given election cycle,[2] and most donors live in a small set of unrepresentative areas (Bramlett, Gimpel and Lee 2011; Powell 2018). Partisan donors' special access to policymakers may allow them to significantly distort representation (Barber, Canes-Wrone and Thrower 2017; Rhodes, Schaffner and La Raja 2018). Yet, even as influential theories express concern about partisan donors' influence (e.g., Hacker and Pierson 2011), we know remarkably little about what they actually want from government.[3]

To inform theoretical and substantive research on donor influence, this note provides a more detailed account of partisan donors' policy preferences. We make two main contributions.

First, our account advances the literature conceptually. Existing research largely conceives of donors' views on a single ideological dimension (e.g., Bafumi and Herron 2010; Hill and Huber 2017), theorizing and documenting that the "donor class" in each party is more extreme than citizens of that party on this overall dimension. We break new ground with hypotheses about partisan donors' views specific to each party in multiple policy domains.

Second, this study also represents an empirical advance; to test our predictions we conducted an original survey of partisan donors, the largest such survey ($n = 1,152$) to date. The respondents to our survey collectively contributed over \$17.2 million to campaigns since 2008. The survey included an oversample of the top 1% of donors, from whom we have hundreds of responses.

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[1]"Call Time For Congress Shows How Fundraising Dominates Bleak Work Life," *The Huffington Post*, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/01/08/call-time-c ongressional-fundraising_n_2427291.html.

[2]"Donor Demographics," *OpenSecrets*, https://www.opensecrets.org/overview /donordemographics.php.

[3]Our work is also related to but distinct from the literature that has documented affluent Americans' views (e.g., Gilens 2012; Page, Bartels and Seawright 2013).

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We compare partisan donors' views to the benchmark of partisan citizens' views measured in a separate original survey. This comparison allows us to document how partisan donors are different than citizens of the same party—the most comparable group in the public, and to whom politicians may be more responsive were donor influence to decline (Lax, Phillips and Zelizer 2017).

Our data documents extremely large differences between partisan donors and mass partisans—however, these differences dramatically vary by party and policy domain in a manner not previously documented and in line with our hypotheses. We consider three domains: economic policy, social policy, and globalism (e.g., immigration and free trade). We find that Republican donors' views are especially conservative on economic issues relative to Republican citizens, but are closer to Republican citizens' views on social issues. By contrast, Democratic donors' views are especially liberal on social issues relative to Democratic citizens, whereas their views on economic issues are closer to Democratic citizens' views. Finally, both groups of donors are more pro-globalism than citizens. These differences are very large: for example, the gap between *Republican donors'* and *Republican citizens'* views on economic issues is as large as the gap between *Republican citizens'* and *Democratic citizens'* views. We also replicated our findings in a pre-registered analysis of an independent dataset gathered by other scholars.

Substantively, our findings contribute to our understanding of donor influence by identifying specific ways donors are especially likely to distort representation: encouraging Republican politicians to be especially conservative on economic issues, encouraging Democratic politicians to be especially liberal on social issues, and encouraging both parties to support more pro-globalism policies. Our results may therefore be relevant to understanding a variety of puzzles in contemporary American politics, including: the Republican Party passing fiscally conservative policies that we show donors favor but that are unpopular even with Republican citizens; the focus of many Democratic party campaigns on progressive social policies popular with donors but that are less publicly popular than classic New Deal economic policies (Bartels 2018; Nyhan 2016); and the popularity of anti-globalism candidates opposed by party

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establishments, such as Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders (Oliver and Rahn 2016). As with previous research, our descriptive data cannot definitively establish the role of donors in such phenomena. However, by advancing an understanding of donor influence that makes distinctions between the parties and between policy domains, our work can help significantly refine theoretical and substantive understandings of donor influence.

Theory and Hypotheses

Building on prior work, we expected partisan donors would be more extreme than mass partisans (i.e., Republican donors more conservative and Democratic donors more liberal) because having extreme preferences should motivate costly forms of participation such as donations. However, given their greater wealth and education levels, we also expected donors to be more economically conservative and more socially liberal—i.e., less populist and more libertarian—all else equal (Bramlett, Gimpel and Lee 2011; Malka, Lelkes and Soto In press).

These expectations should lead Republican donors to be especially conservative on economic issues relative to social issues. On social issues, their greater wealth and education should be associated with more liberalism but their status as donors would predict greater conservatism, providing countervailing predictions. However, on economic issues, both their wealth and status as donors predict greater conservatism. Our first hypothesis is therefore:

Hypothesis 1: The difference in conservatism between Republican donors and mass Republicans on economic issues should be larger than the difference between Republican donors and mass Republicans on social issues.

By a similar logic, we expected Democratic donors to be especially liberal on social issues relative to economic issues. On economic issues, their greater wealth and education would predict greater conservatism, whereas their status as donors would predict greater liberalism, providing countervailing predictions. However, on social issues, both their wealth and status as donors would predict greater liberalism. Our second hypothesis is therefore:

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Hypothesis 2: The difference in liberalism between Democratic donors and mass Democrats on social issues should be larger than the difference between Democratic donors and mass Democrats on economic issues.

Finally, we expected donors of both parties to be more pro-globalism (e.g., pro-free trade and immigration) due to their anticipated higher levels of cosmopolitanism (Jackman and Vavreck 2011). Our third hypothesis is therefore:

Hypothesis 3: Both parties' donors are more globalist than the mass public in their parties.

As our space is limited, Online Appendix B presents formalizations of these hypotheses.

Original Survey Data

To test these hypotheses, we recruited partisan donors to our survey from a sampling frame we defined as follows. We began with data from Bonica (2014) on the names and addresses of all disclosed political donors in the US, updated for giving in 2016. We then selected all donors who, since 2008, had given a disclosed donation to a campaign affiliated with one party but, at any time since 1978, had never given a disclosed donation to a campaign affiliated with the other party. Among this group, we computed the total amount each donor had donated from 2008–2016. Finally, within each party, we sampled 4,100 donors who had given a total in the top 1% and 4,100 who had given a total in the bottom 99% of donors. The average donor in the top 1% strata gave $37,447 in disclosed donations during 2008–2016.

We sent these donors a letter at the address associated with their donations. The letter directed donors to a website where they could enter a unique identifying code and respond to the survey.

To compare donors with mass partisans, we also gathered 1,636 survey responses from the mass public from Survey Sampling International.[4]

Due to space constraints, we provide data on survey response rates and representativeness in Online Appendix C. We find that these samples are generally closely representative of their

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[4]We also reported results from this data collection in a separate project [AUTHOR CITATION].

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sampling frames on many characteristics. The exception is that very large donors were less likely to respond to the donor survey. Thankfully, we oversampled very large donors in anticipation and so still have responses from hundreds of them. There we also show descriptive statistics on donors' demographics, contributions, and geographic distribution.

Question wordings can be found in Online Appendix E. We pre-registered which survey items would be used to construct each of three issue scales: economic issues, social issues, and globalism issues. We average responses to the items in each area into an additive scale. The economic issues scale consists of 5 items on issues such as taxation and increasing government spending on various public programs. The social issues scale consists of 4 items on the following issues: gay marriage, the death penalty, gun control, and abortion. The globalism scale consists of 4 items on issues related to trade, immigration, and whether the US should focus on problems at home or abroad. The economic and social issues are coded to lie between 0 (most liberal) and 1 (most conservative). The globalism items are coded to lie between 0 (most pro-globalism) to 1 (most anti-globalism).

We also conducted an out-of-sample replication of our predictions using an independent dataset Hill and Huber (2017) collected by merging donation records to the 2012 CCES. We pre-registered which items in this dataset we would use to form policy indices in each domain, and how we would formally test our hypotheses in both datasets (see Online Appendices E and G).

The results we present in the main text are unweighted. We present weighted results in Online Appendix B. The weighted results are similar.

Results

In this section we present graphical results and discuss the statistical significance of key differences; in Online Appendix B we present regression results with formal hypothesis tests.

Figure 1 gives the means of the issue scales by policy domain and party in our data. We first discuss how Republican donors (represented by the red $) and mass partisans (represented by the red M) differ in their attitudes on economic vs. social issues (Hypothesis 1). The top row shows

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Figure 1: Mean of Policy Indicies, by Party and Policy Domain, Unweighted

(a) Original Data

(b) Replication in Hill and Huber (2017)
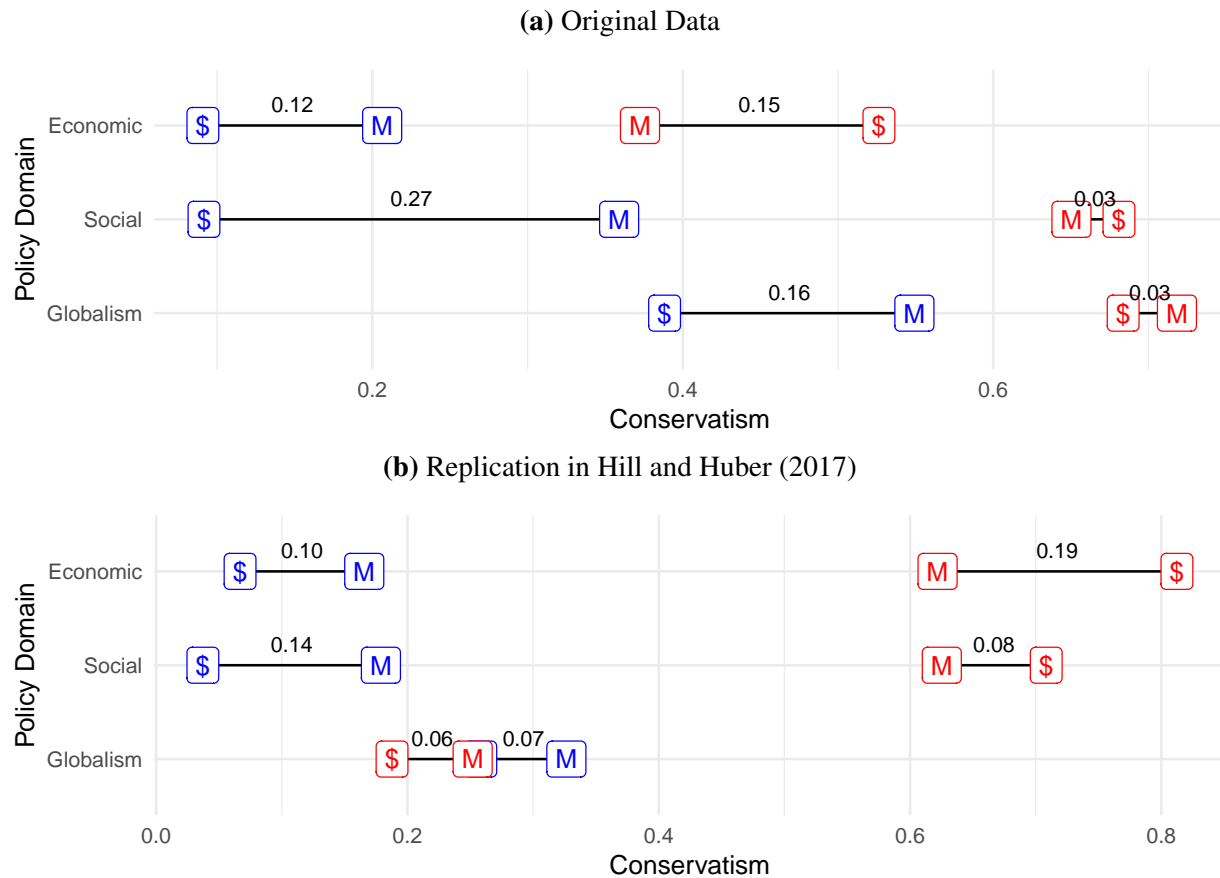
that Republican donors are 0.15 units more conservative on economic issues than Republican mass partisans. For example, 52% of Republican donors strongly disagree that the government should make sure all Americans have health insurance, versus only 23% of Republican citizens. On the other hand, Republican donors are similar to citizens on social issues, with a difference of only 0.03 units. This is consistent with Hypothesis 1: the difference in conservatism between Republican donors and citizens on economic issues (0.15) is larger than the difference on social issues (0.03). The difference in these differences (0.12) is highly statistically significant ($t = 5.89$, see Online Appendix B). It is also substantively large: *the gap between Republican citizens and Republican donors on economic issues is as large as the gap between Republican citizens and Democratic citizens*. Panel 1b replicates this analysis in the Hill and Huber (2017) data. We obtain a similarly

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sized and statistically significant difference-in-differences estimate of 0.11 ($t = 7.89$).

Next, we turn to Democratic donors and citizens (Hypothesis 2). As shown in Figure 1a, Democratic donors are 0.27 units more liberal than Democratic mass partisans on social issues, compared to a 0.12-unit difference on economic issues. For example, 80% of mass Democrats support the death penalty whereas only 40% of Democratic donors do. Consistent with Hypothesis 2, this difference-in-difference estimate of 0.15 is statistically significant ($t = 14.79$). This difference is substantively large—the gap between Democratic citizens' and donors' views on social issues is nearly as large as gap between Democratic and Republican citizens' views. We also replicate this analysis using the Hill and Huber (2017) data. Although the point estimate is smaller (0.04 units), it is correctly signed and statistically significant ($t = 10.24$).

Finally, the bottom rows in Figures 1a and 1b report results consistent with Hypothesis 3. Donors are more globalist than mass partisans in both parties. The estimate in our survey is an average difference of 0.12 units, which is statistically significant ($t = 13.34$), and similar in size to the large differences described above. For example, 83% of citizens agreed with the statement "We should pay less attention to the problems overseas and concentrate on problems here at home" versus only 44% of donors. (Although this difference exists in both parties, it is mainly driven by Democrats.) We again obtain a similar and statistically significant estimate when replicating this analysis in the Hill and Huber (2017) data (an average difference of 0.07, $t = 8.52$).[5]

Exploiting our survey's large oversample of superelite donors, we find that these results consistently grow stronger when limiting our comparisons to the top 1% of donors. Figure 2 presents these results. Among Republicans, the difference between mass partisans and the top 1% of donors is 0.19 scale points larger on economic issues than social issues ($t = 6.75$). Among

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[5]Republicans are more pro-globalist than Democrats in the Hill and Huber (2017) data because their survey was administered in 2012, when Republicans were more supportive of free trade. In 2017, when we collected our data, the partisan difference on this issue reversed. However, donors were more globalist than citizens in both datasets, consistent with Hypothesis 3.

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Democrats, it is 0.17 larger on social than economic issues ($t = 15.11$). The top 1% of donors in both parties are also 0.16 points more globalist than mass partisans ($t = 14.07$). Hence, the most elite donors exhibit preferences even more in line with our overall hypotheses.

Figure 2: Mean of Policy Indicies, by Party and Policy Domain – Top 1% of Donors Only

(a) Original Data
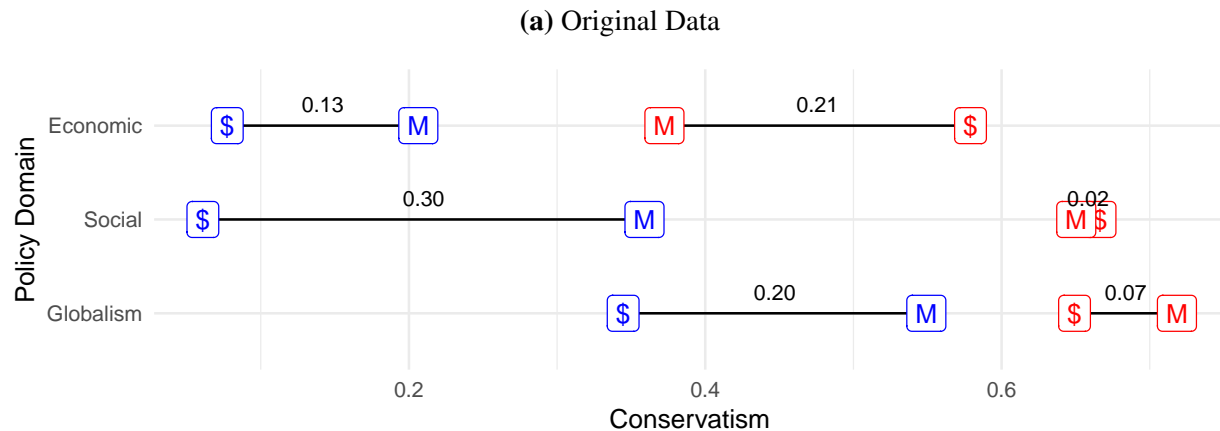
Online Appendix Figure OA2 also shows the relationships between the policy indices and the amount donors contributed. These relationships are generally consistent with our expectations that wealthier individuals should be more pro-globalism and economically conservative.

Our results are consistent and robust. Results on all the individual items used to form our indices are presented in Online Appendix D.1. Our conclusions are consistent across items; more extreme response options also consistently garner greater support from donors in the hypothesized domains. In Online Appendix D.2 we also show distributions of the indices by party for citizens and donors. To assess the robustness of our conclusions to non-response bias, Online Appendix Figure OA1 presents weighted versions of these comparisons and finds similar results.

Conclusion

Having conducted the largest survey of U.S. political donors to date, we documented previously unreported heterogeneity in the gap between the parties' donor and voter bases: these gaps vary dramatically by party and policy area. In line with our theoretical hypotheses, we found that whereas Republican donors are relatively more extreme than Republican mass partisans on

economic issues, Democratic donors are relatively more extreme than Democratic mass partisans on social issues.[6] Both parties' donor bases are also more pro-globalism than their voter bases.

These patterns are important for substantive and theoretical debates about the nature of donor influence in American politics. For example, our findings suggest that in times of Republican control, policy making is likely to be more out-of-step with mass preferences in the economic domain, reflecting the fiscal preferences of a wealthy donor base. This may help explain why the Republican Party pursues policies such as tax cuts for the wealthy and the restructuring of entitlement programs, which many surveys indicate go against the preferences of their own partisan voter base. On the other hand, our results may help explain why Democrats often make liberal social policy proposals despite having more popular policy positions on economic issues. Finally, our findings may shed light on recent leaders of both parties (e.g., George W. Bush, Barack Obama) pursuing pro-globalism agendas in support of free trade and expanded immigration, as well as the popularity of anti-globalism populists (e.g., Donald Trump, Bernie Sanders) in both parties.

References

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[6]This accords with Rigby and Maks-Solomon (2017), who find Republicans better represent the wealthy on economic issues but Democrats better represent the wealthy on social issues.

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Rigby, Elizabeth and Cory Maks-Solomon. 2017. "Are the Rich Always Better Represented than the Poor? Income- and Party-Stratified Policy Representation in the U.S. Senate." Working paper.

Online Appendix

A   Figures Referenced In Main Text

Figure OA1: Mean of Policy Indicies, by Party and Policy Domain – Weighted

(a) Original Data

**(b)** Replication in Hill and Huber (2017)
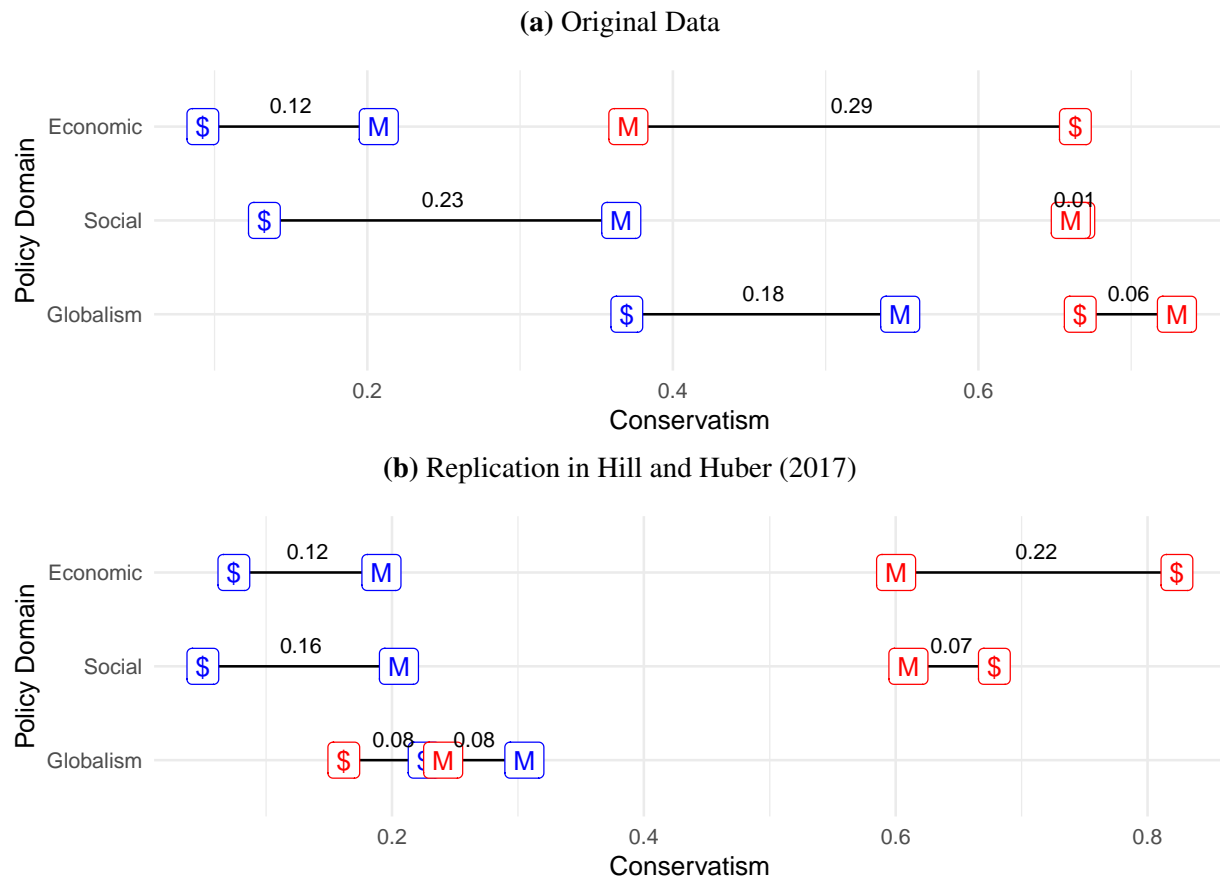
Note: See Online Appendix C.2.3 for a discussion of how we constructed the survey weights.

Figure OA2 shows binned scatterplots of the relationship between contribution amounts for donors and the policy indices. The points in each panel are averages of the policy indices within equally sized bins of donors grouped by contribution amount; the lines show the quadratic best fit.

Figure OA2: Relationship Between Contribution Amounts and Policy Indices – Binned Scatterplots

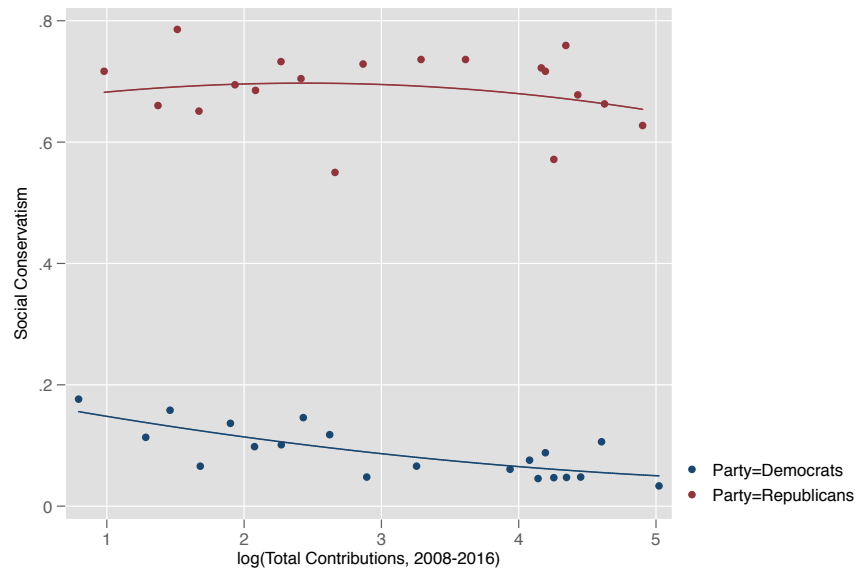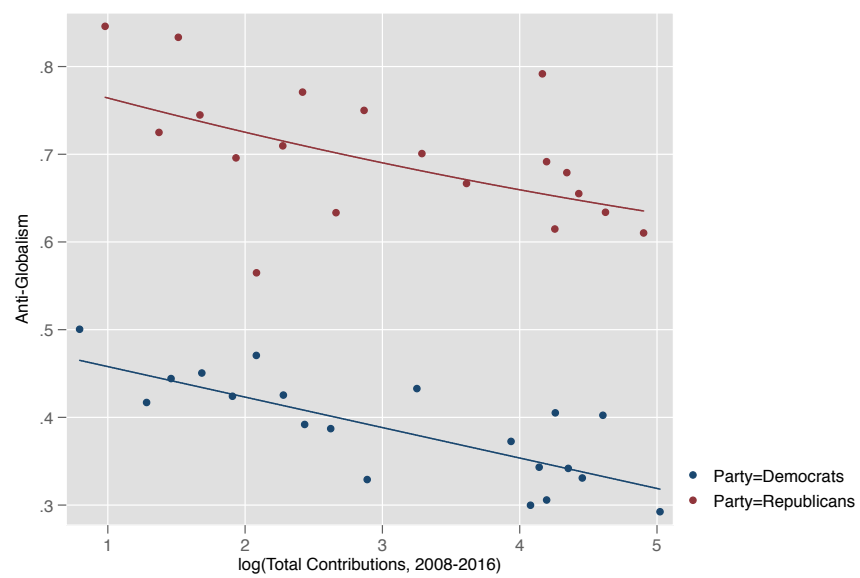**(a)** Economic Index
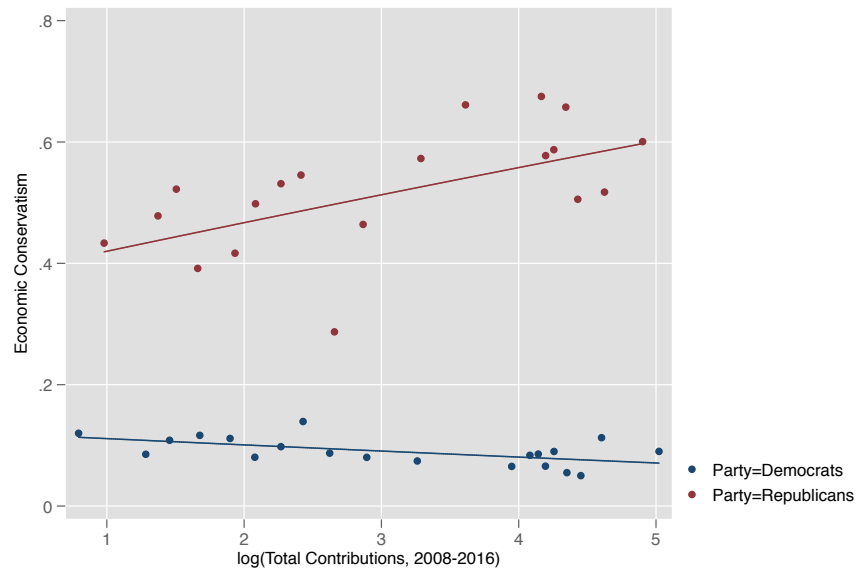
(b) Social Index

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Figure OA2: Relationship Between Contribution Amounts and Policy Indices – Binned Scatterplots (continued)

(c) Globalism Index

B Formalization of Hypotheses and Statistical Tests

B.1 Hypotheses

As explicated in the pre-analysis plan in Online Appendix G, we estimate the following OLS regression models by stacking together responses to the economic and social issue scales indices and clustering standard errors by respondent.

To test Hypothesis 1, we estimate the following model restricting the sample to Republican donors and Republican mass partisans:

$$A_i = \alpha + \beta_1 RD_i + \beta_2 E_i + \beta_3 (RD_i \times E_i) + \epsilon_i. \tag{1}$$

A_i is each respondent's score on an attitude scale (rescaled to lie between 0 and 1, with higher values corresponding with more conservative attitudes), E_i is a dummy variable representing whether the attitude is from the economic issues scale (the baseline is that the attitude comes from the social attitudes scale), RD_i is a dummy variable representing Republican donors (with mass Republicans as the baseline category), and ϵ_i is stochastic error at the respondent level. β_1 captures the anticipated greater conservatism of donors than citizens in the Republican party in general (in this case using social issues to establish a point of comparison). Using this model, we formalize Hypothesis 1 as $\beta_3 > 0$ to capture that we expect Republican donors to be especially conservative on economic issues.

To test Hypothesis 2 for Democratic donors and Democratic mass partisans, we estimate a similar model:

$$A_i = \alpha + \beta_1 DD_i + \beta_2 E_i + \beta_3 (DD_i \times E_i) + \epsilon_i \tag{2}$$

where DD_i is a dummy variable representing Democratic donors (with mass Democrats as the baseline category), and the other variables are defined as in equation (1). Using this model, we can

formalize Hypothesis 2 as $\beta_3 > 0$, capturing our prediction that we expect the greater liberalism of Democratic donors than mass Democrats on economic issues to be smaller than on social issues (the baseline category).

Finally, to test Hypothesis 3, we pool Republicans and Democrats together to estimate the following model:

$$G_i = \alpha + \beta_1 D_i + \beta_2 P_i + \epsilon_i \tag{3}$$

where G_i represents the globalism issues scale (scaled to lie from 0-1, where larger values are more pro-globalism),[7] D_i represents Republicans and Democratic donors pooled together (with mass Republicans and Democrats as the baseline category), and P_i is an indicator for partisanship with 1 = to Republican respondents and 0 = Democratic respondents. Using this model, we formalize Hypothesis 3 as $\beta_1 > 0$, as we expect donors within both parties to be more pro-globalist.

B.2 Statistical Tests

Table OA1 shows the results of statistical tests of Hypotheses 1 and 2 in our data. Table OA2 shows the same in the Hill and Huber (2017) data. Table OA3 shows the results of statistical tests of Hypothesis 3 in our data, and Table OA4 shows the same for the Hill and Huber (2017) data.

All of these tables show the overall results, the results when weighting, and, in the case of our data, the results when only using the top 1% of donors to compute the means for the donor sample. See Online Appendix C.2.3 for a discussion of how we constructed the survey weights for the analyses that use weights.

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[7]In the Figures we code larger values as more anti-globalism to maintain the interpretation of the scales as more conservative. However, for our formal hypothesis tests we reverse code this scale in order to be consistent with our pre-analysis plan. The choice of the sign on the scale does not affect the results.

Table OA1: Results from Original Survey Data (Hypotheses 1 and 2)

	Full Sample		Top 1% Donors		Weighted	
	Reps	Dems	Reps	Dems	Reps	Dems
Economic Issues	-0.28***	-0.15***	-0.28***	-0.15***	-0.29***	-0.16***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Donors	0.03	-0.27***	0.02	-0.30***	0.01	-0.23***
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.05)	(0.03)
Economic Issues × Donors	0.12***	0.15***	0.19***	0.17***	0.29***	0.12***
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.01)	(0.06)	(0.03)
Constant	0.65***	0.36***	0.65***	0.36***	0.66***	0.37***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Observations	1,876	3,304	1,613	2,329	1,822	3,226
R-squared	0.26	0.28	0.28	0.29	0.29	0.23

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variables are issue positions ranging from 0 (liberal) to 1 (conservative). Omitted categories are social issues and mass partisans. Leftmost two columns present unweighted results from full sample of donors and mass partisans. Middle two columns present unweighted results but only include oversample of top 1% of donors. Rightmost two columns present weighted results from full sample of donors and mass partisans.

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05 (two-tailed)

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Table OA2: Results from Hill and Huber (2017) Data (Hypotheses 1 and 2)

| | Unweighted | | Weighted | |
	Reps	Dems	Reps	Dems
Economic Issues	-0.00	-0.01***	-0.01*	-0.01***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Donors	0.08***	-0.14***	0.07**	-0.16***
	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.02)	(0.00)
Economic Issues × Donors	0.11***	0.04***	0.15***	0.04***
	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.03)	(0.01)
Constant	0.63***	0.18***	0.61***	0.21***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Observations	42,642	53,497	42,642	53,497
R-squared	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variables are issue positions ranging from 0 (liberal) to 1 (conservative). Omitted categories are social issues and mass partisans. Leftmost two columns present unweighted results from full sample of donors and mass partisans. Rightmost two columns present weighted results from full sample of donors and mass partisans.

*** $p<0.001$, ** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$ (two-tailed)

Table OA3: Results from Original Survey Data (Hypothesis 3)

	Full Sample			Top 1% Donors			Weighted		
	All	Reps	Dems	All	Reps	Dems	All	Reps	Dems
Donors	0.12***	0.03**	0.16***	0.16***	0.07***	0.20***	0.13***	0.06***	0.18***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Republican	-0.21***	—	—	-0.20***	—	—	-0.21***	—	—
	(0.01)			(0.01)			(0.01)		
Constant	0.47***	0.28***	0.45***	0.46***	0.28***	0.45***	0.47***	0.27***	0.45***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.00)
Observations	5,166	1,884	3,282	3,936	1,620	2,316	5,032	1,822	3,210
R-squared	0.25	0.01	0.11	0.26	0.01	0.15	0.23	0.02	0.11

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variables are issue positions ranging from 0 (anti-globalism) to 1 (pro-globalism). Omitted categories are mass partisans and Democrats. Leftmost three columns present unweighted results from full sample of donors and mass partisans. Middle three columns present unweighted results but only include oversample of top 1% of donors. Rightmost three columns present weighted results from full sample of donors and mass partisans.

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05 (two-tailed)

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Table OA4: Results from Hill and Huber (2017) Data (Hypothesis 3)

	Unweighted			Weighted		
	All	Reps	Dems	All	Reps	Dems
Donors	0.07***	0.06***	0.07***	0.08***	0.08***	0.08***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Republicans	0.07***	—	—	0.06***	—	—
	(0.00)			(0.00)		
Constant	0.67***	0.75***	0.67***	0.69***	0.76***	0.69***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Observations	47,729	21,217	26,512	47,729	21,217	26,512
R-squared	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variables are issue positions ranging from 0 (anti-globalism) to 1 (pro-globalism). Omitted categories are mass partisans and Democrats. Leftmost three columns present unweighted results from full sample of donors and mass partisans. Rightmost three columns present weighted results from full sample of donors and mass partisans.

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05 (two-tailed)

C Additional Detail on Surveys

In this section we describe the response rates and representativeness of our partisan donor and mass public samples.

Online Appendix Section E gives the full question wordings.

C.1 Survey Response Rates

The response rate to our donor survey (7%) compares similarly to high-quality surveys of the mass public. For example, Pew's response rates to their phone surveys are 9%; see "What Low Response Rates Mean for Telephone Surveys," *Pew*, `http://www.pewresearch.org/2017/05/15/what-low-response-rates-m ean-for-telephone-surveys/#fn-291178-1`. Other response rates, such as to the *Washington Post*'s telephone polls, are even lower. And cumulative response rates—taking into account all stages of the sampling process—of high-quality Internet panels such as the GfK Knowledge Panel can be below 1% (Callegaro and DiSogra (2008)). Our donor survey was conducted by mail, and its response rate compares favorably to response rates of mass public surveys conducted by mail (Broockman, Kalla and Sekhon (2017)).

C.2 Survey Representativeness

C.2.1 Partisan Donor Survey

Table OA5 compares the donor sampling frame and survey respondents on observable characteristics. Race and gender are estimated as above. Unsurprisingly, the largest donors were slightly less likely to respond to our survey, but our oversample recruited in anticipation of this meant that we still have hundreds of super-elite donors in each party in our data.

The response rate among Democratic donors was 10.8% and the response rate among Republican donors was 3.2%.

Table OA5: Characteristics of partisan donors who responded to survey and in sampling frame.

	Donated Since 2008 (mean)	# Donations Since 2008 (mean)	Top 1% of Donors by Amount	Self-Reported Age (mean)	Self-Reported Millionaire?	White*	Male*	N
Whole Frame (With Oversample)	$19,002	32.8	50%	Unknown	Unknown	93%	59%	16,400
Respondents	$14,967	55.0	43%	63	52%	94%	61%	1,152

* Race and gender is estimated from last and first names. The white category refers to non-Hispanic whites.

C.2.2   Mass Public Survey

Table OA6 presents information on the representativeness of this sample, which is generally comparable to the US Census and the American National Election Study (ANES). We used the standard ANES party identification question to identify partisans and included leaners.

C.2.3   Weighting

As a robustness check, we also conducted weighted analyses. We constructed weights for both the donor and mass public samples using entropy balancing with the `ebalance` package in Stata (Hainmueller (2012)). For the mass public sample, we weighted to the 2015 American Community Survey (ACS) for all variables presented in Table OA6 except for race and ethnicity, where we used the 2016 American National Election Study because the ACS race and ethnicity questions do not separate non-Hispanic whites and Hispanics in the same way as our surveys. The donor sample was weighted to the sampling frame variables listed in Table OA5.

For our original survey data, we weight the donors to match to the sampling frame; we weight mass partisans to match to the ACS/ANES. For the Hill and Huber (2017) data, we apply both CCES weights and weights per our PAP to increase the weight of larger donors (roughly doubling their weight).

One challenge with comparing our original donor survey with the Hill and Huber (2017) survey is that their dataset contains more small donors, whereas many of the theories of elite influence

revolve around larger contributors. To gather our main dataset we oversampled the top 1% of donors as a result, and they constitute nearly 50% of our sample. To make the datasets more comparable, we will create a threshold that equals 1 in the Hill and Huber (2017) dataset if the donors gave $200 or more in total disclosed donations from 2010 - 2012 (2 election cycles) and equals 1 in our data if the donors gave $500 or more in disclosed from 2008 - 2016 (5 election cycles). We then weight the Huber data such that the share above that threshold is the same as in our data.

Table OA6: Descriptive Statistics of SSI Sample, American Community Survey, and American National Election Study

	SSI	2015 ACS	2016 ANES
Education			
Less than High School	3.9%	12.9%	9.0%
High School/Some College/Associate's	68.3	59.0	55.2
Bachelor's Degree	16.8	17.9	22.6
Graduate Degree	11.0	10.1	13.3
Gender			
Male	47.1%	49.4%	47.5%
Female	52.9	50.6	52.5
Race			
White	69.3%	73.1%	67.6%
Black	11.9	12.7	10.2
Hispanic	10.6	—	14.4
Asian	5.7	5.4	2.6
Other	2.5	8.9	5.3
Age			
18-29	24.9%	21.7	16.7%
30-49	36.9	33.6	32.2
50-64	23.4	25.4	26.0
65+	14.8	19.2	25.0

Note: Education categories collapsed for comparability across surveys. 2015 ACS considers Hispanic to be separate variable from race/ethnicity.

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C.3 Additional Details on Donor Respondents

In this subsection we present additional details on the respondents to our donor survey.

C.3.1 Contributions

Figure OA3 shows the distribution of amount contributed from 2008 to 2016 among the sampling frame (including the oversample of large donors) and the survey respondents. Figure OA4 shows the same for the number of contributions given.

Figure OA3: Amount Given - Respondents and Sampling Frame
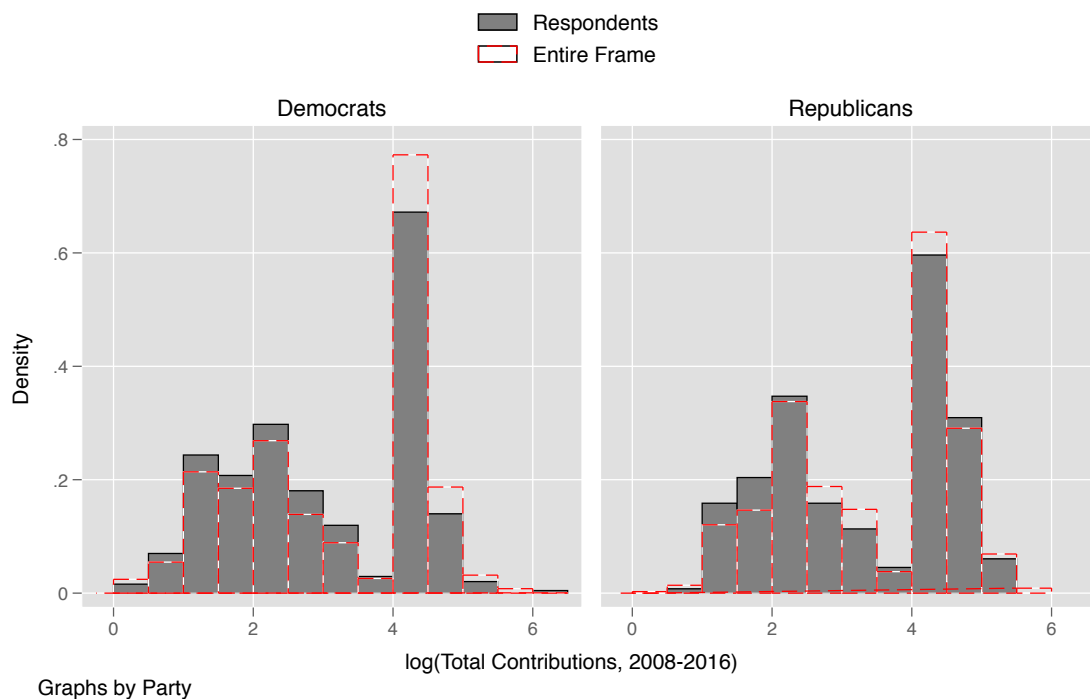
Notes: Log base 10 used.

C.3.2 Geographic Distribution

Figures OA5 and OA6 show the geographic distribution of Democratic and Republican donors, respectively, in our sampling frame and who responded to the survey. Each point on these figures represents one county in the US, with the size of the points scaled to the number of

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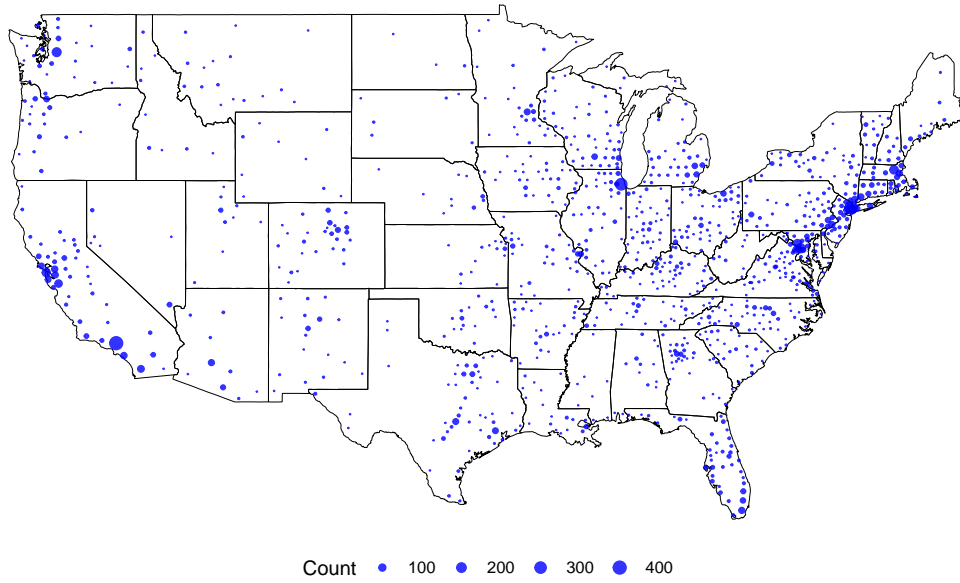**Figure OA4:** Number of Contributions - Respondents and Sampling Frame
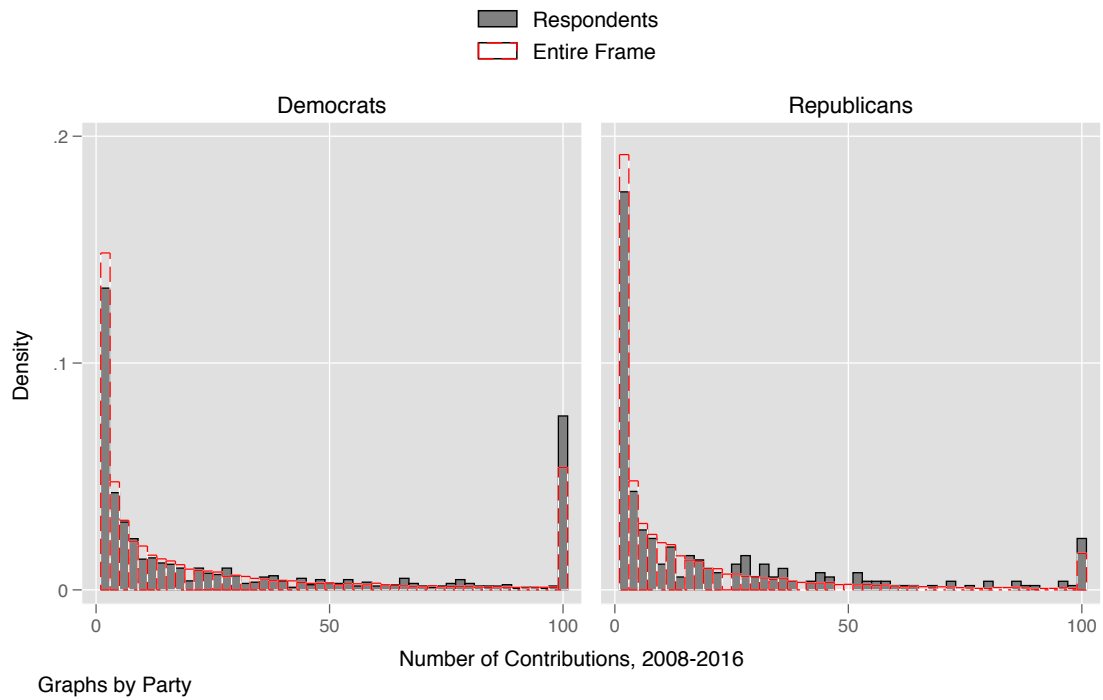
Notes: Number of contributions above 100 are topcoded at 100.

donors. Counties where there were no donors have no point shown.

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Figure OA5: Geographic Distribution of Democratic Donors
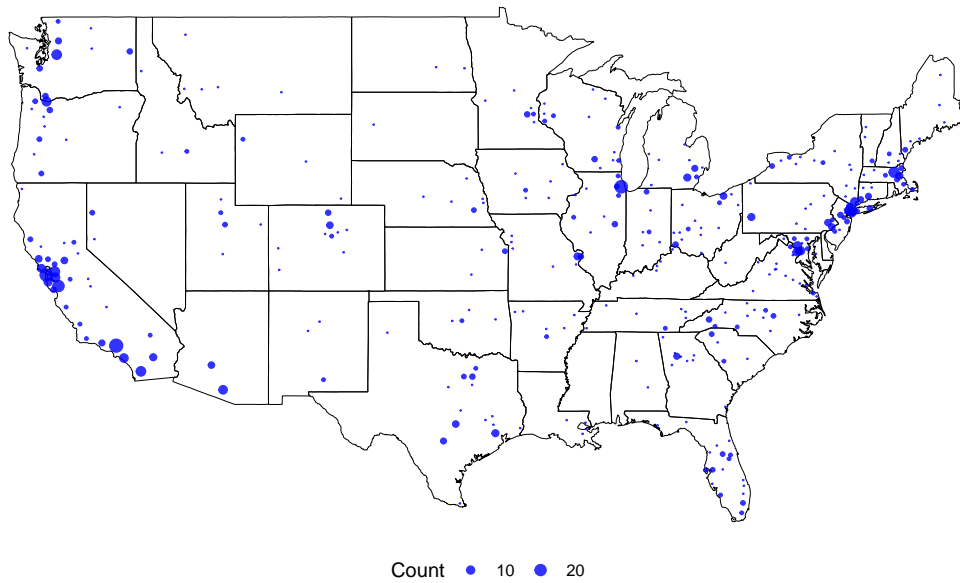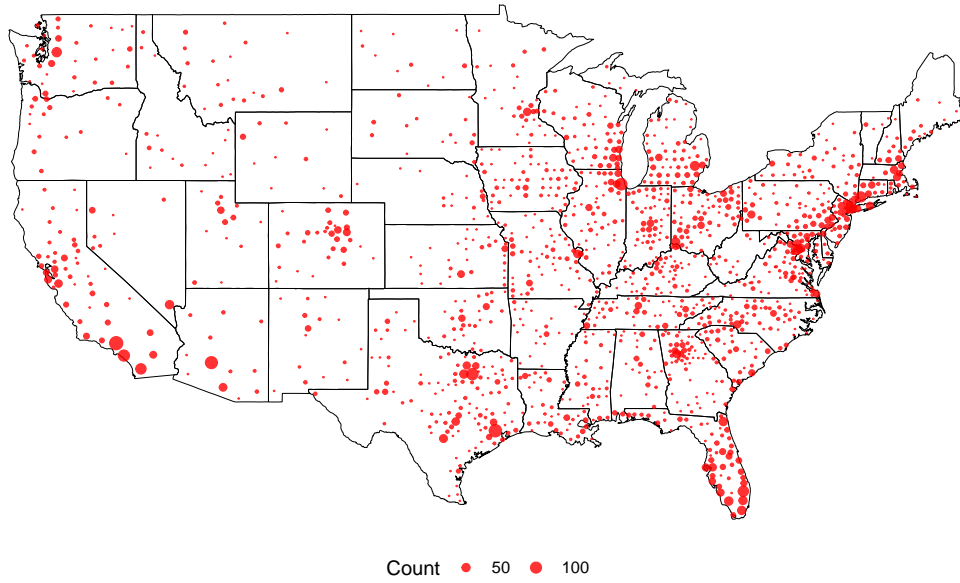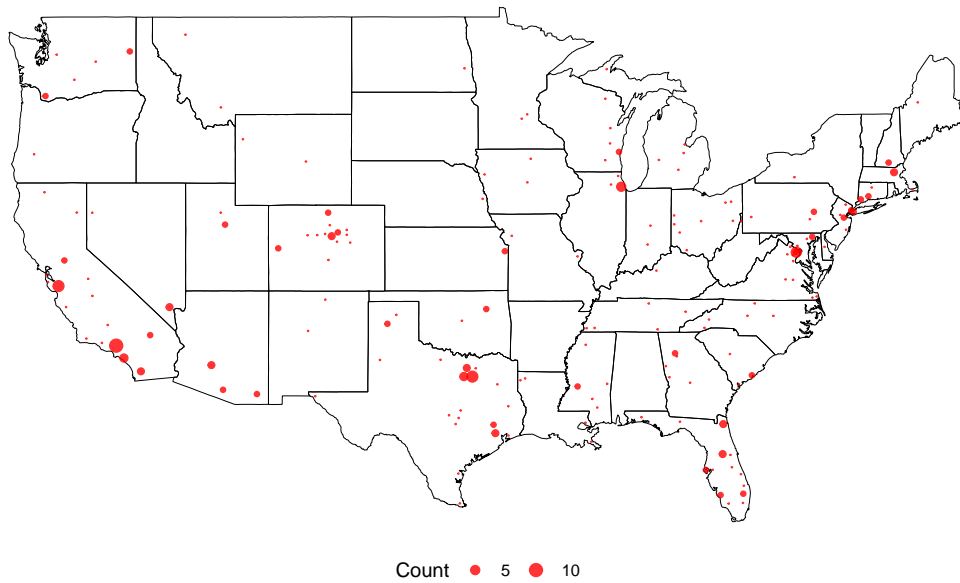
(a) Sampling Frame

Count   ● 100   ● 200   ● 300   ● 400

(b) Survey Respondents

Count   ● 10   ● 20

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Figure OA6: Geographic Distribution of Republican Donors

(a) Sampling Frame

Count ● 50 ● 100

(b) Survey Respondents

Count ● 5 ● 10

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We did not preregister weighting our survey data by region, but based on pre-submission feedback we have calculated the average response rate to the donor survey by region. Table OA7 shows the results.

Table OA7: Response Rate by Region and Party

	Democratic Donors	Republican Donors
Midwest	11%	2%
Northeast	9%	2%
South	9%	3%
West	14%	5%

Unsurprisingly, as we are located at a West Coast-based university, we see slightly higher response rates among donors in the West. However, the indices do not vary by region among donors, suggesting this is unlikely to introduce bias and that weighting on region would not change our results.[8]

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[8]In particular, regressions within both parties of each index on indicators for region yield substantively small coefficients and insignificant F-statistics.

D   Visualizations of Raw Data

D.1   Results on Individual Items

In this section we show the results on each individual item in our survey. Online Appendix E gives the question wordings.

Figure OA7: Economic Issues

(a)

Increase federal spending on the poor.

Support programs benefiting only poorest Americans.

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(b)

Increase taxes on those making >$250k per year.

Increase taxes on those making >$1MM per year.

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Figure OA7: Economic Issues (continued)

(c)

Support for universal healthcare, even if means raising taxes.

Figure OA8: Social Issues

(a)

Same−sex marriage.

Death penalty.

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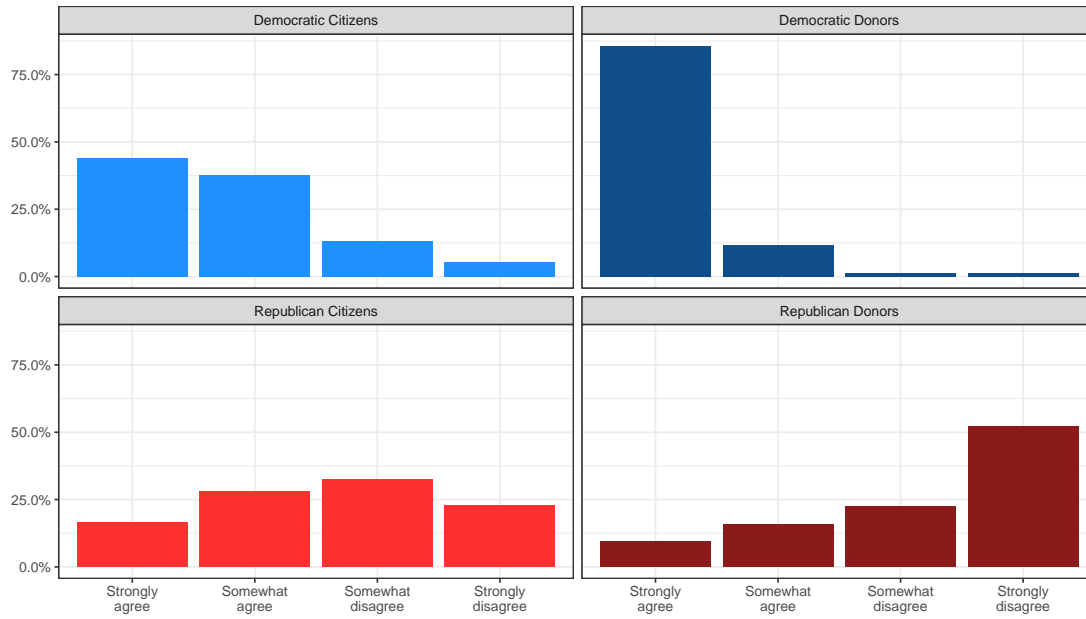
Figure OA8: Social Issues (continued)

(b)

Gun control.

View on abortion.
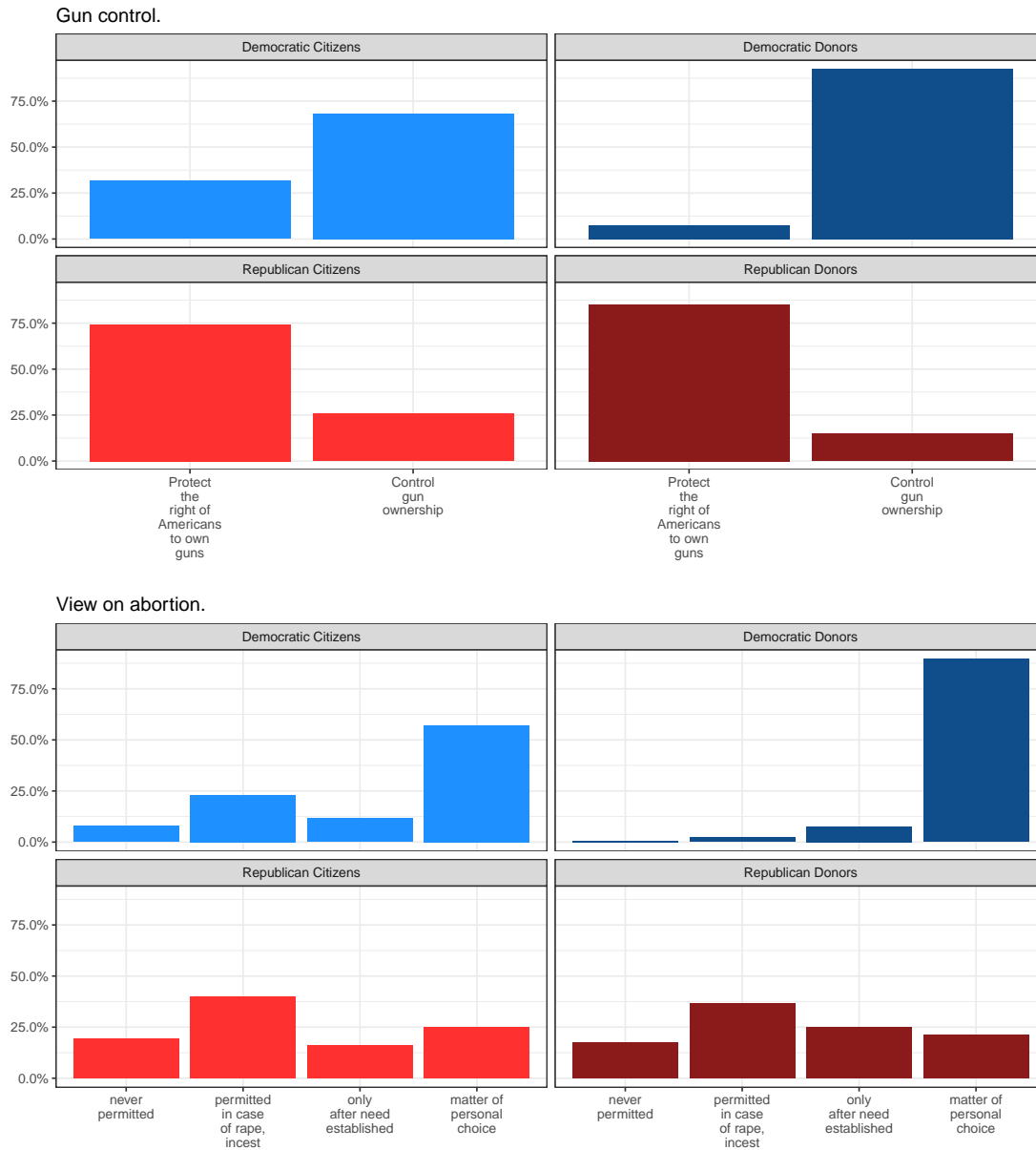
Figure OA9: Globalism Issues

(a)

Pay less attention to problems overseas and concentrate on problems at home.

American jobs vs. free trade and foreign jobs trade–off.

33

(b)

Free trade agreements a good thing.

Immigration.

34
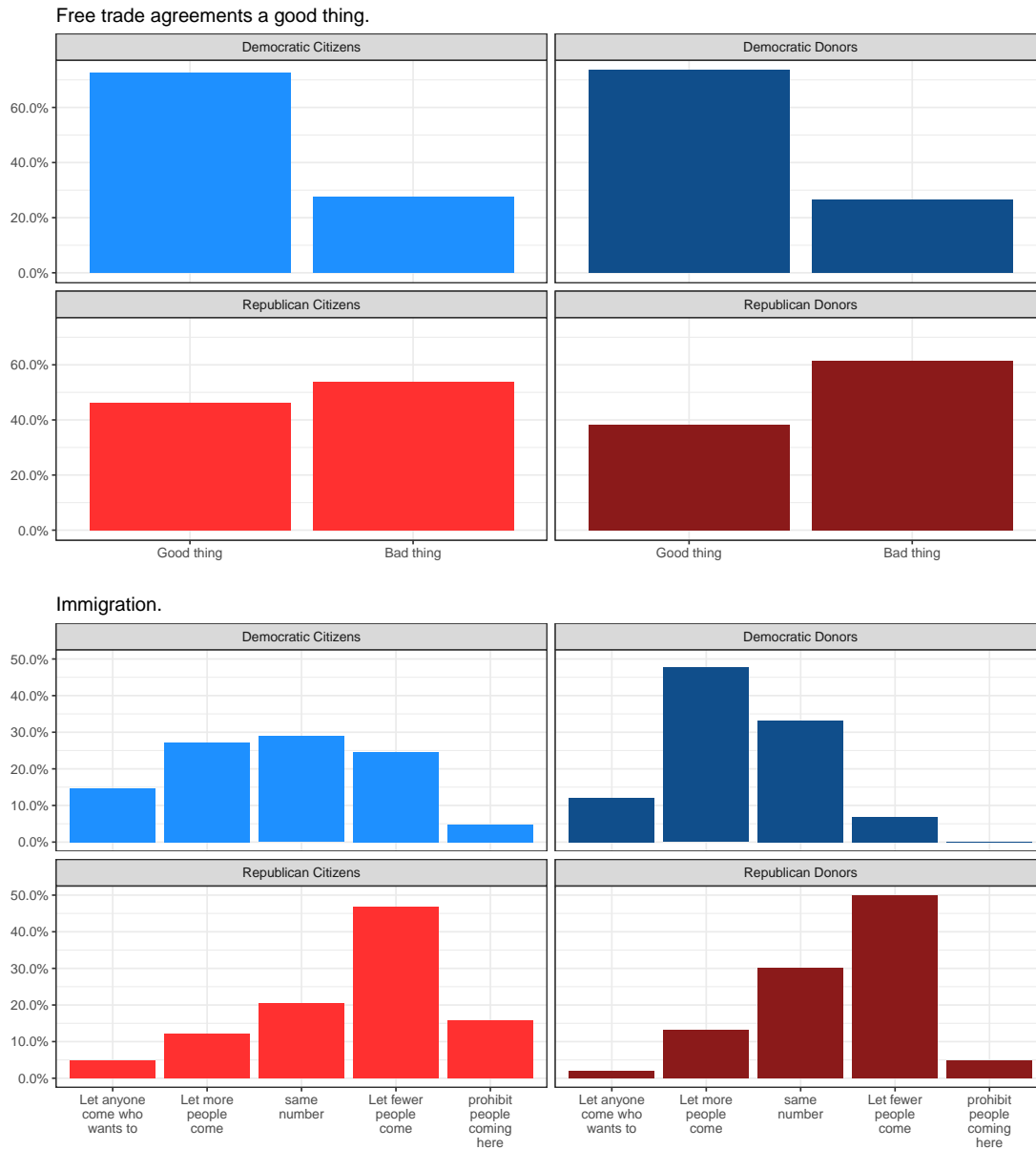
D.2 Histograms of Policy Indices

In this section we show histograms of each of the policy indices broken down by the party and donor/citizen levels.
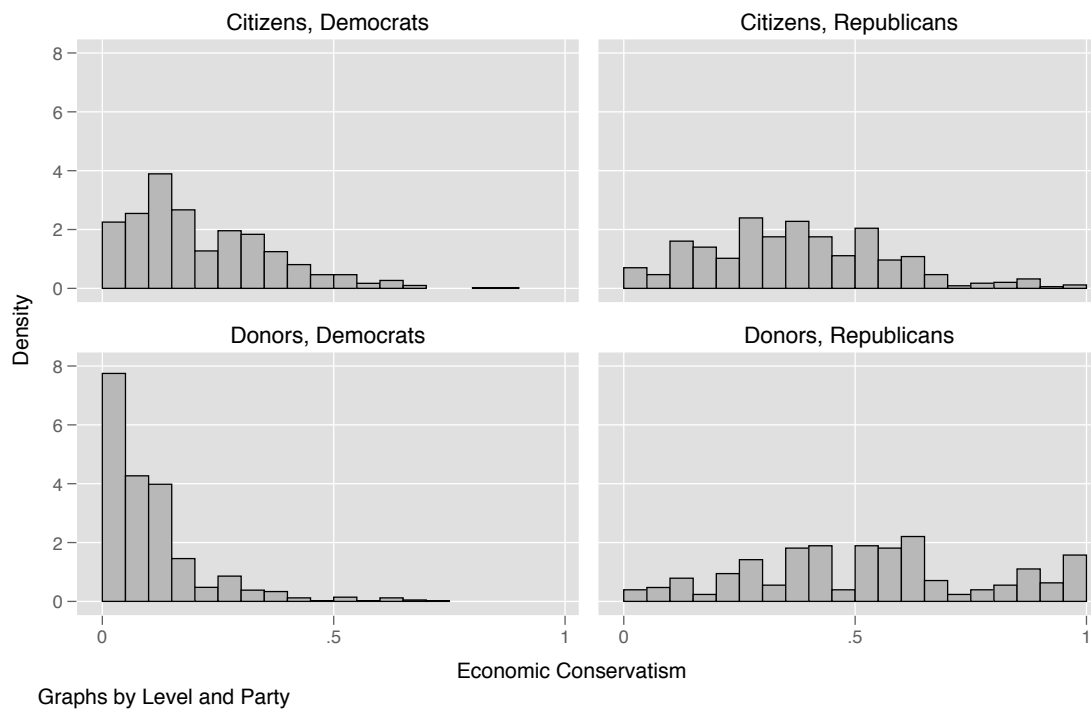
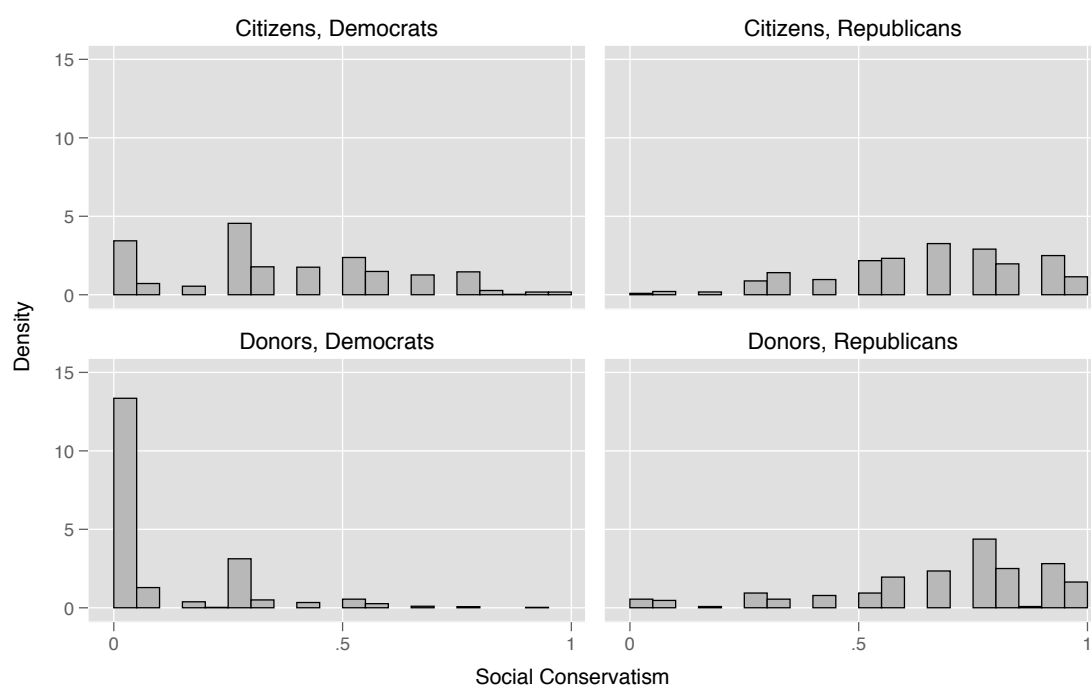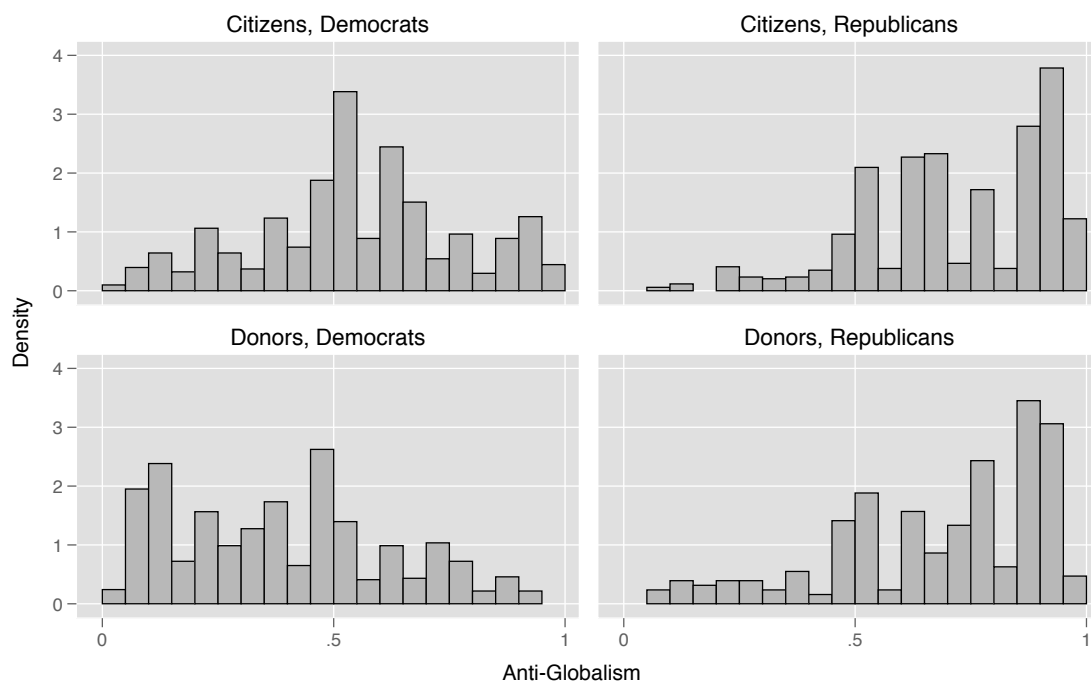**Figure OA10:** Economic Policy Index Histograms

Graphs by Level and Party

Figure OA11: Social Policy Index Histograms

Graphs by Level and Party

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Figure OA12: Globalism Policy Index Histograms

Graphs by Level and Party

E   Question Wordings

E.1   Original Survey

This section gives the wording of the survey questions we combined into each index, as specifed in our pre-analysis plan.

E.1.1   Economic Issues

1. Do you think federal government spending on each of the below should be increased, decreased, or stay the same? *Aid to the poor*

- Increased

- Stay the same

- Decreased

2. The federal government collects tax money and spends it on many different types of programs. How much do you support spending money on government programs that benefit only the poorest Americans?

- A great deal

- A lot

- A moderate amount

- A little

- Not at all

3. The federal government collects tax money from many different sources. How much do you support raising tax money through income taxes on people who earn over $1 million per year?

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- A great deal

- A lot

- A moderate amount

- A little

- Not at all

4. The federal government collects tax money from many different sources. How much do you support raising tax money through income taxes on people who earn over $250,000 per year?

- A great deal

- A lot

- A moderate amount

- A little

- Not at all

5. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: "The government should make sure that every American has health care coverage, even if it means raising taxes to pay for it."

- Strongly agree

- Somewhat agree

- Somewhat disagree

- Strongly disagree

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E.1.2 Social Issues

1. Do you support or oppose allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally?

- Strongly support

- Somewhat support

- Somewhat oppose

- Strongly oppose

2. Are you in favor of the death penalty for a person convicted of murder?

- In favor

- Not in favor

3. What do you think is more important—to protect the right of Americans to own guns, or to control gun ownership?

- Protect the right of Americans to own guns

- Control gun ownership

4. There has been some discussion about abortion during recent years. Which one of the opinions on this page best agrees with your view?

- By law, abortion should never be permitted

- The law should permit abortion only in case of rape, incest, or when the woman's life is in danger

- The law should permit abortion for reasons other than rape, incest, or danger to the woman's life, but only after the need for the abortion has been clearly established

- By law, a woman should always be able to obtain an abortion as a matter of personal choice

E.1.3 Globalism Issues

1. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: "We should pay less attention to the problems overseas and concentrate on problems here at home."

- Strongly agree

- Somewhat agree

- Somewhat disagree

- Strongly disagree

2. Which of these statements comes closer to your own views?

- We should protect American jobs even if it means reducing the standard of living of people living overseas.

- We should improve the standard of living of people living overseas even if it means losing some American jobs.

3. In general, do you think that free trade agreements like NAFTA and the policies of the World Trade Organization have been a good thing or a bad thing?

- Good thing

- Bad thing

4. When it comes to people from less-developed countries immigrating to the United States, which one of the following do you think the government should do?

- Let anyone come who wants to

- Let more people come than we do today, but not everyone

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- Keep letting in the same number of people as we do today

- Let fewer people come than we do today

- Prohibit people coming here from other countries

E.2 Hill and Huber (2017) Survey

For the replication using the Hill and Huber (2017) data, we again pre-registered the construction of three issue scales. For the economic issues scale, we use 5 survey items from the 2012 Cooperative Congressional Election Survey (CCES) on government spending on social programs, tax cuts, and the Affordable Care Act. For the social issues scale, we use 3 survey items on gay marriage, abortion, and the don't ask/don't tell policy. For the globalism scale, we use 5 survey items on free trade and the conditions under which military intervention in foreign contexts is appropriate.

E.2.1 Economic Issues

1. Congress considered many important bills over the past two years. For each of the following tell us whether you support or oppose the legislation in principle. 2011 House Budget Plan. The Budget plan would cut Medicare and Medicaid by 42% and would reduce debt by 16% by 2020.

- Support

- Oppose

2. Congress considered many important bills over the past two years. For each of the following tell us whether you support or oppose the legislation in principle. The Tax Hike Prevention Act. Would extend Bush-era tax cuts for all individuals, regardless of income. Would increase the budget deficit by an estimated $405 billion.

- Support

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- Oppose

3. Congress considered many important bills over the past two years. For each of the following tell us whether you support or oppose the legislation in principle. Repeal Affordable Care Act. Would repeal the Affordable Care Act.

- Support

- Oppose

4. Congress considered many important bills over the past two years. For each of the following tell us whether you support or oppose the legislation in principle. Affordable Care Act of 2010. Requires all Americans to obtain health insurance. Allows people to keep current provider. Sets up health insurance option for those without coverage. Increases taxes on those making more than $280,000 a year.

- Support

- Oppose

5. If your state were to have a budget deficit this year it would have to raise taxes on income and sales or cut spending, such as on education, health care, welfare, and road construction. What would you prefer more, raising taxes or cutting spending? Choose a point along the scale from 100% tax increases (and no spending cuts) to 100% spending cuts (and no tax increases). The point in the middle means that the budget should be balanced with equal amounts of spending cuts and tax increases. If you are not sure, or dont know, please check the not sure box.

- 0=All from tax increases

- 100=All from spending cuts

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E.2.2 Social Issues

1. Which one of the opinions on this page best agrees with your view on abortion?

- By law, abortion should never be permitted

- The law should permit abortion only in case of rape, incest, or when the woman's life is in danger

- The law should permit abortion for reasons other than rape, incest, or danger to the woman's life, but only after the need for the abortion has been clearly established

- By law, a woman should always be able to obtain an abortion as a matter of personal choice

2. Do you favor or oppose allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally

- Favor

- Oppose

3. Congress considered many important bills over the past two years. For each of the following tell us whether you support or oppose the legislation in principle. End Don't Ask, Don't Tell. Would allow gays to serve openly in the armed services.

- Support

- Oppose

E.2.3 Globalism Issues

1. Congress considered many important bills over the past two years. For each of the following tell us whether you support or oppose the legislation in principle. U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement. Would remove tariffs on imports and exports between South Korea and the U.S.

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- Support

- Oppose

2. Would you approve of the use of U.S. military troops in order to intervene in genocide or a civil war?

- Yes

- No

3. Would you approve of the use of U.S. military troops in order to assist the spread of democracy?

- Yes

- No

4. Would you approve of the use of U.S. military troops in order to protect allies from foreign attack?

- Yes

- No

5. Would you never approve of the use of U.S. military troops?

- Yes

- No

F References for Appendices

References for Appendices

Bonica, Adam. 2014. "Mapping the Ideological Marketplace." *American Journal of Political Science* 58(2):367–386.

Broockman, David E., Joshua L. Kalla and Jasjeet S. Sekhon. 2017. "The Design of Field Experiments With Survey Outcomes: A Framework for Selecting More Efficient, Robust, and Ethical Designs." *Political Analysis* 25(4):435–464.

Callegaro, Mario and Charles DiSogra. 2008. "Computing Response Metrics for Online Panels." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 72(5):1008–1032.

Hainmueller, Jens. 2012. "Entropy Balancing for Causal Effects: A Multivariate Reweighting Method to Produce Balanced Samples in Observational Studies." *Political Analysis* 20(1):25–46.

G   Pre-Analysis Plan

We filed a pre-analysis plan for another project which described how we would combine the survey items into economic, social, and globalism issue scales in our original data. We use the same items as that other project when analyzing our original data. We then filed the below pre-analysis plan before analyzing the Hill and Huber (2017) data. In selecting items which items to use to form the economic, social, and globalism scales from the Hill and Huber (2017) data, we examined all of the policy items they analyzed and selected items that we expected to solely tap the economic, social, and global domains.

Pre-Analysis Plan for "The Divergent Preferences of Partisan Donors and Mass Partisans"

Date: August 27, 2018

Introduction

This pre-analysis plan will be filed before statistical analysis of previously collected data. As part of our study of the political preferences of technology elites ("Predispositions, the Political Behavior of Wealthy Americans, and Implications for Economic Inequality: Evidence from Technology Entrepreneurs"), we interviewed partisan donors and the mass public about their attitudes on economic, social, and globalist policy views. Based on some patterns in those data, along with prior literature, we pursued this follow-up project where we seek to compare the preferences of partisan donors and mass partisans, and assess how legislative behavior influences future donations. Hence, **this is not a traditional pre-analysis plan in that we are not completely blind to the data**. We have investigated some patterns in the dataset, but have not explicitly conducted the statistical analyses described below. Further, we have not yet analyzed the Huber and Hill (2015) dataset, which serve as an out-of-sample replication of our core analyses.

Empirical Predictions

We pre-register the following empirical predictions:

(1) Republican donors are especially conservative relative to Republican voters on economic as opposed to social issues.

(2) Democratic donors are especially liberal relative to Democratic voters on social as opposed to economic issues.

(3) Both groups of donors are more "globalist" (e.g., pro free trade and immigration) than the mass public in their parties

Categorization of Issues

We will use the same categorization as in the truly blind PAP we filed for our original project.

Economic Issues: We asked 11 questions about economic redistribution: q3.1.1, q3.1.2, q3.1.3, q3.1.4, q3.1.5, q3.1.6, q3.1.7, q3.1.8, q3.1.10, q3.2.1, q3.2.2. We plan on constructing an additive index of these 11 items, coded to lie between 0 (liberal) and 1 (conservative).

Note added after filing PAP: This list did not accurately reflect the categorization actually used in our original project, which it was our intent to mirror here. Those items are: q3.1.1, q3.2.2, q3.4.1, q3.4.2, and q3.5.

Social Issues: We asked 4 questions about social issues: q5.1, q5.2, q5.3, q5.4. We plan on constructing an additive index of these 4 items, coded to lie between 0 (liberal) and 1 (conservative).

1

Globalism Issues: We asked 4 questions about neo-liberal economic attitudes related to globalization: q4.1, q4.2, q4.3, q4.4. We plan on constructing an additive index of these 4 items, coded to lie between 0 (anti-globalist) and 1 (pro-globalist).

Statistical Models:

To test empirical prediction (1), we will stack the social and economic issue indices in the same dataset and cluster the standard errors by respondents, and then estimate the following model via OLS restricting the sample to Republican donors and mass Republicans:

$$A_i = \alpha + \beta_1 RD_i + \beta_2 E_i + \beta_3 (RD_i \times E_i) + \varepsilon_i$$

where A_i represents a position on an attitude scale (rescaled to lie between 0 and 1 as noted above), E_i is a dummy variable representing whether the attitude is from the economic issues scale (the baseline is that the attitude comes from the social attitudes scale), RD_i is a dummy variable representing Republican donors (with mass Republicans as the baseline category), and ε_i is stochastic error. β_1 captures the anticipated greater conservatism of donors than voters in general (in this case using social issues to establish a point of comparison).

We predict that $\beta_3 > 0$. That is, the difference in conservatism between Republican donors and mass Republicans on economic issues should be larger than the difference between Republican donors and mass Republicans on social issues.

To test empirical prediction (2), we stack the data as we did for testing empirical prediction (1), and estimate the following model via OLS restricting the sample to Democratic donors and mass Democrats:

$$A_i = \alpha + \beta_1 DD_i + \beta_2 E_i + \beta_3 (DD_i \times E_i) + \varepsilon_i$$

where A_i represents a position on an attitude scale (rescaled to lie between 0 and 1 as noted above), E_i is a dummy variable representing whether the attitude is from the economic issues scale (the baseline is that the attitude comes from the social attitudes scale), DD_i is a dummy variable representing Democratic donors (with mass Democrats as the baseline category), and ε_i is stochastic error.

We predict that $\beta_3 > 0$. That is, the difference in liberalism between Democratic donors and mass Democrats on social issues should be larger than the difference between Democratic donors and mass Democrats on economic issues. Recall that all variables are signed such that higher values reflect conservative attitudes.

To test empirical prediction (3), we estimate the following model via OLS in three samples: (1) restricting the sample to Republican donors and mass Republicans; (2) restricting the sample to Democratic donors and mass Democrats; and (3) pooling Republicans and Democrats together.

$$G_i = \alpha + \beta_1 RD_i + \varepsilon_i \text{ (sample 1)}$$

2

$G_i = \alpha + \beta_1 DD_i + \varepsilon_i$ (sample 2)

$G_i = \alpha + \beta_1 D_i + \beta_2 P_i + \varepsilon_i$ (sample 3)

where G_i represents the globalism issues scale, RD_i represents Republican donors (with mass Republicans as the baseline category), DD_i represents Democratic donors (with mass Democrats as the baseline category), D_i represents Republicans and Democratic donors pooled together (with mass Republicans and Democrats as the baseline category), P_i is an indicator for partisanship with 1 = to Republican respondents and 0 = Democratic respondents, and ε_i is stochastic error.

To test the robustness/generalizability of our findings, we will also conduct a set of secondary analyses identical to the above but limiting the donor dataset to those donors we have already identified as in the top 1% of partisan donors. (This is not possible with the Huber/Hill dataset because the number of large donors is fairly small.)

Replication with Huber and Hill (2017) Data

We replicate the tests of empirical predictions (1)-(3) with a separate dataset collected in 2012 (the 2012 CCES). We believe that empirical prediction (3) might be weaker in these data because the survey predates the rise of Trump in 2012. All models will be estimated as above. Here, we specify which survey items are most similar to the ones asked in our own survey and how we will classify them into scales.

Economic Issues: CC332A, CC332D, CC332G, CC332I, CC415r. We plan on constructing an additive index of these 5 items, coded to lie between 0 (liberal) and 1 (conservative).

Social Issues: CC324, CC326, CC332J. We plan on constructing an additive index of these 3 items, coded to lie between 0 (liberal) and 1 (conservative).

Globalism Issues: CC332F, CC414_3, CC414_4, CC414_5, CC414_7. We plan on constructing an additive index of these 5 items, coded to lie between 0 (liberal) and 1 (conservative).

One challenge with comparing our first dataset with the Huber and Hill (2017) dataset is that their dataset contains more small donors, whereas many of the theories of elite influence revolve around larger contributors. To gather our main dataset we oversampled the top 1% of donors as a result, and they constitute nearly 50% of our sample. To make the datasets more comparable, we will create a threshold that = 1 in the Huber and Hill (2017) dataset if the donors gave $200 or more in total disclosed donations from 2010 - 2012 (2 election cycles) and = 1 in our data if the donors gave $500 or more in disclosed from 2008 - 2016 (5 election cycles). We then weight the Huber data such that the share above that threshold is the same as in our data.

3